Meditations on the Divine
Nature of Creativity
The Hollow Reeds
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The Hollow Reed:

Meditations on the Divine Nature of Creativity

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Chapter 1: “The Vanishing Point of the Self”

"*In the moment of true creation, the artist disappears like ink into water, leaving only a trace of the Infinite.*"

Imagine standing before a blank canvas, or holding a silent instrument, or watching the cursor blink on an empty screen. There is anticipation, yes—but in that stillness, something stirs that is not merely within you, but beyond you, yet somehow passing through you. It is not your mind that awakens—it is your self that begins to vanish.

True creation does not occur when we are most aware of ourselves, but when the self disintegrates, like mist in the first breath of dawn. The Renaissance painters called it the divina mania—a divine madness. The ancient Greeks ascribed it to the Muses. In Vedic

tradition, the seer is only the Rishi—a medium, not an owner. The Qur'an says the Prophet spoke "not from his own desire, but from revelation." Each of these traditions points to one radical truth: you are not the source of what you create.

Let me tell you a story—one you won't find in textbooks. During the Great Library of Alexandria's burning, a poet stood outside, weeping. Not for the books, but for the unwritten words that would never come now, because their future vessels—the readers, the thinkers, the unborn writers—were extinguished before they could become hollow enough to receive them.

The poet was not grieving the loss of knowledge. He was grieving the silencing of divine whisperings. For he knew, as did Laozi, who wrote the Tao Te Ching and then disappeared, that all great wisdom comes through, not from, us.

Creation, then, is not possession—it is a form of evaporation. A relinquishing. A dissolution.

This is why Milton, when asked about Paradise Lost, spoke not of his own genius but of being "visited nightly by a voice" that dictated to him. Blind, unable to see the page, he became more transparent—less of a man, more of a conduit. He did not create Paradise Lost; it was created through him.

And so, when you pick up the pen, the brush, or the instrument, ask not what shall I make, but what must pass through me today?

To create is to become the canvas on which the Eternal paints.To create is to become the flute through which the divine breath sings. To create is to become the night sky onto which a constellation is traced—not by your fingers, but by hands unseen.

In this first meditation, I invite you to reflect not on your talent, your originality, your struggle—but on your absence. The most sacred thing in you is the space you make for something else to arrive.

Creativity is not what you do. It is what happens when you stop doing. Like a mirror emptied of fog, your soul becomes reflective, and the Creator looks into it and begins to dream.

Let your ambition vanish. Let your pride dissolve. Let your name fade from the byline of eternity. Then, and only then, will something be born through you that belongs to no one—yet touches everyone. Just as rivers do not take credit for their flow, just as fire does not claim to have burned wood, neither should the artist claim authorship.

Chapter 2: “The Empty Vessel That Receives the Sky”

Let us imagine an empty clay pot. It doesn’t shout. It doesn’t try to prove anything. It simply waits. Quiet. Still. Ready. When the rain begins to fall, it does not run to catch it. The sky pours itself down, and the pot receives—not by effort, but by being open.

This is what true creativity often looks like.When we feel empty of pride, when our hearts are quiet, something gentle and deep begins to move within us. Not because we are clever, but because we have made space inside. Like that waiting pot, we become ready to receive what we could never force. We may sometimes think that creating great art means doing more—working harder, thinking deeper, chasing ideas. But often, it is the other way around. Real beauty enters when we become still.

We can look to the lives of those who have created timeless things. The Persian poet Firdawsi, who spent decades writing the Shahnameh, did not rush. He wrote slowly, with great patience. It was as if he was listening to something that spoke only in silence. The words came like honey dripping from a high branch—not quickly, but pure.

Even the story of Moses, alone on the mountain, shows us something similar. He waited in the quiet. He did not come down with plans of his own. He came carrying something given, not made. He was not proud. He was ready.

When we allow ourselves to become empty, something greater can fill us. The still lake does not pull the sky into itself. It simply reflects it, clearly, because it does not move.

Our thoughts are often like water in a storm—too much noise, too many waves. But when we find calmness, something unexpected happens. An idea may rise. A poem may arrive. A picture may

form in our mind. And we may wonder, “Where did that come from?” It comes through us, not from us.

The more we try to own our work, the more it slips away. But when we step aside, when we become the flute and not the musician, the real song begins. And maybe this is what the Creator always waits for: not strong hands, not proud minds, but open hearts. Hearts that do not say, “This is mine,” but whisper instead, “Let it come.”

We do not have to know what we are doing all the time. We only need to be ready—like that quiet pot beneath the open sky. Let us ask ourselves gently:

Have we made enough space inside to be filled with something larger than ourselves?

Chapter 3: “When the River Forgets Itself”

There are times when we do something creative—paint a picture, write a poem, sing a song—and suddenly, we feel as if we are not the one doing it.

The brush moves, but our hands feel light, as if something else is guiding them. The words appear, but we do not remember thinking them. The music flows, but it feels like it is flowing through us, not from us. In those rare moments, something magical happens. It is as if the river forgets that it is a river, and simply becomes the flow.

This is what many great creators have felt. Not pride, but surprise. Not control, but surrender. They often speak of moments when they felt like a window, not the view. Like a flute, not the breath. Like a garden, not the rain.

When Milton was asked how he wrote Paradise Lost, he said he simply waited for the voice to come to him. It came not with noise, but in silence. He believed it was not his to claim.

Rabindranath Tagore, too, said that many of his poems arrived in his heart as if someone else had written them already. He just received them. He became, as he once said, the reed through which the wind passed.

These are not just poetic ways of speaking.They tell us something very real about our own creative life. When we truly create something deep and original, we are not trying to be smart. We are not thinking about success or fame. We are not asking, “Will people like this?” In that moment, we are simply lost in the act itself. Time disappears. Worry disappears. Even our own name feels far away. And maybe that is the secret. The river flows best when it forgets its own name. The tree grows tallest when it does not know it is tall. The stars shine brightest when they do not see their own light.

In the same way, we create best when we stop trying to prove anything. When we let go of the need to impress, something inside us opens up. And from that space, a soft voice rises. It is not loud, but it is strong. It does not boast, but it touches deeply. That voice may not be ours alone. It may be the voice of something greater—something eternal—that only speaks when we are humble enough to listen.

We do not need to force this voice. We only need to make room for it. Let us then become like the river—flowing freely, without needing to claim the source. Let us become like the wind—moving where we are sent, without pride or fear.

And let us remember: when we are most lost in the act of creating, we are often closest to the source of all creation.

Chapter 4: “The Candle That Burns Without Knowing”

There is something deeply beautiful in a candle. It gives light, yet it does not ask for praise. It burns, yet it does not feel proud. It melts away slowly, without ever claiming the brightness it spreads. True creativity is often just like that candle.

When we create something from a deep and honest place—without wanting attention, without trying to be great—it shines more purely. It glows with a soft truth. And even if no one notices it right away, its light still reaches someone, somewhere. We do not always need an audience to make something meaningful.

Vincent van Gogh painted some of his best works when no one cared about them. In his lifetime, he sold almost no paintings. But he still painted—again and again—because something inside him needed to be expressed. He did not wait for applause. He listened to the fire in his

heart and followed it. There is something noble in that kind of quiet work. When we create only to be praised, our art becomes heavy. It bends under the weight of ego. But when we create as a way of offering—as a way of surrender—our art becomes light. It floats. It touches.

We may ask: what happens to the self during those moments of deep creation? Perhaps it disappears. Perhaps, like the candle, it slowly melts into the flame. And all that is left is the light.
Every quiet poem we write, every melody that comes to us in silence, every sketch we draw without showing anyone—these are all little flames. They may not light up the whole world. But they light up something inside us. And perhaps that is enough. So let us be like the candle—burning gently, without knowing. Creating not for fame, but for truth. Not for attention, but for connection. Because when we create with love and honesty, even the smallest light becomes part of something greater—something no wind can blow out.

Chapter 5: “The Silence Before the First Drop”

Before the raindrop falls, the sky holds its breath. Before the poem is written, the mind becomes still. Before any true creation is born, there is a sacred silence—a pause that feels like the world is listening.

We often forget this part. In a world full of noise, we feel we must always be busy, always producing, always showing something. But the deepest kind of creativity does not begin in activity. It begins in emptiness.

Think of a well. If it is already full of muddy water, how can it receive something pure? We must allow it to clear, to rest, to become empty again. Only then can the fresh water rise. In the same way, when we let our thoughts settle, something clear can begin to form inside us. Lao Tzu, the ancient Chinese sage, once said:
"The usefulness of a pot lies in its emptiness."

That might sound strange at first, but it holds great truth. A pot is only useful because of the empty space inside it. Without that emptiness, it cannot hold anything. We, too, must become like the pot—open, quiet, waiting.

This silence is not laziness. It is not doing nothing. It is like the earth lying still before the first seed is planted. It is a holy waiting, full of unseen power.

Many great artists, poets, and musicians have spoken of these quiet moments before something is born. They often say that during those times, they feel both empty and full. Empty of noise. Full of possibility.

Let us not be afraid of silence. Let us not rush to fill every quiet hour with scrolling, speaking, or planning. Because sometimes, the next true creation is just waiting behind a closed door. And silence is the key.

Beethoven once said, “*Music is not in the notes, but in the silence between them.*” That silence gives meaning to the sound. That stillness gives shape to the song.

So maybe the next time we feel a deep stillness inside us, instead of feeling bored or restless, we can say, “Something is coming.” And we can wait. Not with impatience, but with trust.

In the silence before the first drop, something ancient moves. Something unseen breathes through us. And when the first word finally comes, or the first note sings out.

Chapter 6: “The Thread That Pulls from the Invisible”

Have we ever felt that strange pull, that quiet whisper inside, telling us to pick up a pen, hum a tune, or shape something with our hands—without fully knowing why?

It is like an invisible thread being gently tugged from deep within. We do not always see where it leads, but we feel its pull. That thread is the beginning of creation. Not the outer work, but the inner call.

It is not always loud. Sometimes it feels like a breeze brushing across the skin of our thoughts. Sometimes it is like the first scent of rain before the clouds arrive. It does not explain itself. It simply asks us to follow.

We may not know where it will take us, but if we follow that thread with trust, it can lead us to something we did not know was waiting to be born.

Carl Jung, the great thinker of the human mind, spoke about the collective unconscious—a deep ocean beneath all our lives where ancient symbols, stories, and truths live. He believed that sometimes, those truths rise up through dreams, through sudden ideas, through the urge to create.

When we feel pulled to create without understanding why, perhaps it is one of those ancient truths knocking gently on the door of our heart. We are not always the owners of our ideas. Often, we are the carriers.

Think of a spider spinning its web. It does not draw the design on paper first. It simply follows the thread as it comes, one strand at a time. And in the end, something beautiful appears—fragile, yet perfect. In the same way, we must learn to follow the thread of our own creativity. Not with control, but with care. Not forcing it to make sense, but allowing it to show its shape slowly, in its own time.

Sometimes we may feel lost in the middle of our work. We may forget why we began. But if we hold onto that inner thread, gently and patiently, it will lead us home. The shape will come. The meaning will arrive.

There is an old tale from Africa about a woman who weaves cloth that tells the stories of her people. When asked how she decides on the patterns, she says, “The patterns come through my fingers. I only listen.”

We can be like her—listening not with ears, but with attention. With stillness. With respect for the unseen.

Because what we call inspiration is often not our own voice at all. It is something older, something wiser, something timeless.

It pulls us gently through the darkness. It asks us to trust, not to control. And if we follow, we may arrive at a work that surprises even us.